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generating and storing a package code for the item, the generated package code being devoid of electronic delivery address information;

storing the specified electronic delivery address;

associating the stored electronic delivery address to the generated and stored package code;

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B-2

sending the vendor a package code and an associated forwarding electronic address, the forwarding electronic address being different from the electronic delivery address, the vendor forwarding the goods and the package code to the forwarding electronic address associated with the received package code;

reading the forwarded package code and retrieving the stored electronic delivery address associated therewith, and

delivering the goods to the retrieved electronic delivery address.--

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-11 and 13-16 were rejected as being anticipated by Heiden et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested, for the following reasons.

Heiden et al. disclose methods and systems for enabling a party that produces a mailpiece MP to generate and print indicia such as shown in Heiden et al.'s Fig. 1 in which the recipient's address 30 is not in a human readable form (e.g., a barcode). This is the situation shown in Fig. 3 of Heiden et al. and described in the specification at Column 7, lines 1-40. Fig. 5 of Heiden et al.

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shows a variation on the above-described method. In Fig. 5, the service provider (PSD 56) that provides the delivery information generates the indicia 10 and sends the generated indicia 10 to the party that produces the mailpiece MP. The party that produces the mailpiece MP, in turn, prints the received indicia 10 on the mailpiece MP.

In either case, however, the indicia 10 contain the delivery address information, albeit not in human readable form. See Column 7, lines 25-40:

"Note that, in accordance with the subject invention, the delivery information is not disclosed to the party who controls host system 54; i.e. the party producing mailpiece MP, in order to maintain security of the mailing list. The degree of this security varies in different embodiments of the subject invention. As discussed above, in the simplest embodiments the delivery information is simply the actual delivery address. In this embodiment security is provided by no more than the facts that the list is only transiently resident in host system 54 and delivery addresses are not directly human readable from mailpieces. Clearly this is a low level of security but it may be considered sufficient for lists of low value. For lists of greater value, the delivery information can be a pointer to an address data base accessed by the Postal Service. And for lists of high value either form of delivery information can be encrypted." (Emphasis added)

Therefore, Heiden et al. tell us that the delivery information is, in fact, resident on the host system 54, even if they are not directly human readable.

In direct contrast, the package code is recited in claim 1 as being "devoid of delivery address information". The vendor is never sent any delivery information. Instead, the vendor is sent a package code that is devoid of delivery information. The shipper, on the other hand, is sent a shipping identifier and an associated address. Thereafter, the shipper "matches the package code sent to the vendor with the shipping identifier and identifies the associated address as the delivery address of the package.", as claimed in claim 1.

The Heiden et al. reference wholly fails to teach or to suggest the claimed invention. In fact, Heiden et al. teach away from the present invention, in that they send the party that produces

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the letter or package the address to which the letter or package is being shipped - even though that party may not be able to directly read that address.

The steps of sending a package code to the vendor and a shipping identifier and associated address to the shipper are undisclosed and completely unsuggested by the applied reference. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the anticipatory rejections applied to claim 1 and its dependent claims are, therefore, respectfully requested.

Independent claim 7 and its dependent claims are also not anticipated by the Heiden et al. reference, for similar reasons. Heiden et al. do not teach or suggest any steps of receiving a request to pick up a package from a vendor that is identified by a package code devoid of delivery address information. Heiden et al. also do not teach or suggest that the request to pick up the package includes an associated shipping identifier and a delivery address, nor that the shipper matches the shipping identifier with the package code on the package and delivers the package to the associated delivery address. In Heiden et al., the delivery address information is sent directly to the vendor (party that produces the mailpiece MP) - even though the vendor may not be able to directly read that information (see Columns 7 and 8 of Heiden et al.). For at least these reasons, claim 7 is also not anticipated by Heiden et al.

Claim 13 is likewise not anticipated by Heiden et al., in that Heiden et al. do not teach or suggest sending a request for and/or receiving a package code that is devoid of delivery address information, nor the step of surrendering the package with the affixed package code to a shipper. In Heiden, the indicia 10 are either generated by the party that generates the mailpiece MP or the indicia 10 are sent to the party that generates the mailpiece MP by a service provider PSD 56. These indicia 10, unlike the package code recited in the claims, contains delivery address

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information. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102 rejections applied to claim 13 and its dependent claims are, therefore, respectfully requested.

As the rejections of independent claims 1, 7 and 13 are deemed to have been overcome, it is believed that the rejections of dependent claims 3, 6, 12 and 17 are now moot. Therefore, these rejections are not discussed further herein.

Claims 18-28 were rejected as being unpatentable over Shkedy et al. in view of Heiden et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested, for the following reasons.

Independent claims 18 and 27 have been amended to better define the instant invention. Specifically, both claims have been amended to specify that the package code that is sent to the vendor is devoid of delivery address information, thereby insuring that the vendor does not and cannot know the ultimate delivery address of the package, whether the package is in physical or digital form. This, as argued above, is not taught or suggested by Heiden et al. Therefore, even if the methods and systems of Shkedy et al. were to be modified according to the teachings of Heiden et al., the present invention would not result or be suggested by the combination. Indeed, as Heiden et al. teaches to send the (encrypted and not readily human readable) delivery address information to the vendor or entity have produce the mailpiece MP, the person of ordinary skill would not have been led to the claimed inventions. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejections applied to claims 18 and 27 and to their dependent claims are, therefore, respectfully requested.

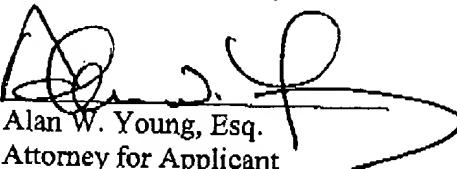
Applicant's attorney, therefore, respectfully submits that all claims are allowable and that the present application in condition for an early allowance and passage to issue. If any

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unresolved issues remain, please contact the undersigned attorney of record at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG LAW FIRM, P.C.

By: 

Alan W. Young, Esq.
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 37,970
4370 Alpine Road, Suite 106
Portola Valley, CA 94028
Telephone: (650) 851-7210
Facsimile: (650) 851-7232

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MARKED UP COPY OF AMENDMENTS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

--18. (Amended) A method of enabling a customer to anonymously purchase an item from a vendor via an electronic draft for delivery to an address without divulging the delivery address to the vendor, comprising the steps of:

storing, in a bank, an encrypted unique identifier for the customer, the encrypted unique identifier being linked to the customer's personal and financial information stored in the bank, including the delivery address;

authenticating the customer having caused a draft to be executed for payment of at least one of a purchase price of the item and a shipping cost by encrypting at least a portion of an identification data provided by the customer and successfully matching the encrypted identification data with the stored encrypted unique identifier;

retrieving at least the authenticated customer's financial information and delivery address;

honoring a draft presented by the vendor for payment of the item only when the customer is successfully authenticated by the bank;

generating a package code for the item, the generated package code being devoid of delivery address information;

associating the retrieved delivery address to the generated package code

~~assigning a package code to the item, the assigned package code being associated with the retrieved delivery address;~~

sending only the package code to the vendor, the vendor affixing the package code to the package, and

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sending the package code and the associated delivery address to a shipper for storage in a shipper database, whereby the shipper picks up the item from the vendor, and prints out a shipping label for the package, a delivery address on the label being that customer address linked to a package code stored in the shipper database that matches the package code affixed to the package.--

--27. (Amended) A method of enabling a customer having purchased goods in digital form from a vendor to have the goods delivered to a specified electronic delivery address without divulging the electronic delivery address to the vendor, comprising the steps of:

generating and storing a package code for the item, the generated package code being devoid of electronic delivery address information;

storing the specified electronic delivery address;

associating the stored electronic delivery address to the generated and stored package code;

~~associating a package code with the specified electronic delivery address and storing the package code and the electronic delivery address;~~

sending the vendor a package code and an associated forwarding electronic address, the forwarding electronic address being different from the electronic delivery address, the vendor forwarding the goods and the package code to the forwarding electronic address associated with the received package code;

reading the forwarded package code and retrieving the stored electronic delivery address associated therewith, and

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delivering the goods to the retrieved electronic delivery address.--